

Remarks

Claims 1-10 were pending in the application. Claims 2 and 5-10 were withdrawn from consideration and are canceled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the recited subject matter. Claims 1, 3, and 4 were rejected. Claim 1 and 3 are amended. Claim 4 is canceled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the recited subject matter. Claims 1 and 3 are now pending. Claim 1 is the independent claim. Reconsideration of the amended application is respectfully requested.

The examiner made the previous restriction requirement final, and withdrew claims 2 and 5-10 from consideration. Claims 2 and 5-10 are canceled.

The examiner rejected claims 1, 3, and 4 as being indefinite, due to certain noted informalities. The claims are amended to address the examiner's comments. The rejection, therefore, should be withdrawn.

The examiner rejected claim 1 as being anticipated by Kuroda. The examiner also rejected claims 1, 3, and 4 as being obvious over Griesmeier, in view of Kuroda.

Independent claim 1 is amended to include the features of claim 4, and to recite that the catalytic burner is mounted in contact with the fuel cell device. Support for this amendment can be found in the specification, for example, at page 13, lines 10-15, and in Fig. 5. The claimed arrangement eliminates the need to preheat the gasses, so that neither a separate heater nor a counter-current device is necessary.

Thus, amended claim 1 recites a method for controlling a fluid balance in an anode circuit of a fuel cell system. According to the claimed method, a measured quantity characteristic of an amount of liquid and/or changes in the amount of liquid in

the fuel cell system is determined. A cooling capacity of a condensing device is adjusted and/or a volume flow rate on a cathode side is adjusted in response to the determined measured quantity. Gases discharged on the cathode side are cooled in the condensing device in order to obtain a condensed liquid. The condensed liquid is fed into the anode circuit of the fuel cell system. A catalytic burner is mounted in contact with and at a fuel cell device. Waste gases remaining after cooling the discharged gasses are passed through the catalytic burner.

Kuroda discloses a methanol fuel cell. The fuel cell includes a heat exchanger, into which exhaust gas is introduced to cool and condense water vapour contained therein. Kuroda does not disclose or suggest mounting a catalytic burner in contact with the fuel cell device, as recited in claim 1.

Griesmeier discloses a fuel cell system. According to the Griesmeier system, a gas-generating device includes at least one reforming reactor, one CO shift reactor with associated cooling device, and one gas cleaning unit. A fuel cell is connected downstream of the gas-generating device. Griesmeier does not disclose or suggest mounting a catalytic burner in contact with the fuel cell device, as recited in claim 1.

Because at least one feature recited in claim 1 is not disclosed or suggested by either reference, no combination of the teachings of the references could render obvious the invention as recited in claim 1. Claim 3 depends from claim 1, and therefore also is not rendered obvious by the cited references. The rejection of claims 1 and 3, therefore, should be withdrawn.

Based on the foregoing, it is submitted that all objections and rejections have been overcome. It is therefore requested that the Amendment be entered, the claims allowed, and the case passed to issue.

Respectfully submitted,



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Date

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